

CLAIM(S):

1. A method of guest-selected recording of television programs in an entertainment system having a head end and a plurality of guest terminals connected by a distribution system, the method comprising:
 - transmitting, from the head end to a guest terminal, a schedule of television programs;
 - transmitting, from the guest terminal to the head end, program recording selection data representing a program selected by a guest for recording;
 - creating a digital file representing the program selected;
 - storing the digital file;
 - transmitting, from the guest terminal to the head end, data requesting playback of the program selected for recording;
 - playing back the program selected based upon the digital file representing the program selected; and
 - transmitting the program being played back to the guest terminal.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein creating a digital file comprises:
 - tuning to a channel on which the program selected is carried; and
 - encoding the program into a digital format to create the digital file.
3. The method of claim 1 and further comprising:
 - creating a recording schedule based upon program recording selection data received.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein creating a digital file is based upon the recording schedule.
5. The method of claim 1 and further comprising:

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associating with the digital file an identification of the guest terminal that provided the program recording selection data.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the schedule of television programs is an interactive program guide.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the program recording selection data is produced based upon a selection made on the interactive program guide.

8. A method of guest-selected recording of television programs in an entertainment system having a head end and a plurality of guest terminals connected by a distribution system, the method comprising:

transmitting, to a guest terminal, a program schedule for available television programming;

receiving, from the guest terminal, program selection data representing a program selected for recording;

digitally storing the program selected when it is broadcast;

receiving, from the guest terminal playback request data;

converting, in response to the playback request data, the digitally stored program to television signals; and

transmitting the television signals to the guest terminal.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein digitally storing the program file comprises:

tuning to a channel on which the program selected is carried; and
encoding the program into a digital format to create a digital file.

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10. The method of claim 9 and further comprising:
associating with the digital file an identification of the guest
terminal that provided the program recording selection data.

11. The method of claim 8 and further comprising:
creating a recording schedule based upon program recording
selection data received.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein digitally storing the program is
based upon the recording schedule.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the schedule of television programs
is an interactive program guide.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the program selection data is
produced based upon a selection made on the interactive program guide.

15. An entertainment system comprising:
a plurality of guest terminals;
a distribution system connected to the guest terminals;
a digital content server for storing entertainment content in digital
files and supplying to the distribution system television
signals based upon the digital files;
a receiver for receiving television programs on a plurality of
channels and supplying the programs to the distribution
system;
an encoder for converting a selected television program on one of
the channels to digital file representing the selected program

and transferring the digital file to the digital content server for storage; and

a computer which communicates with the guest terminals over the distribution system, the computer providing the guest terminals with information about the television programs, and controlling operation of the encoder based upon a selection by a guest of a program to be recorded.

16. The entertainment system of claim 15 wherein the encoder is an array including a plurality of tuners for tuning to the channels and an encoding device connected to each tuner.
17. The entertainment system of claim 15 wherein the computer provides information about the television programs in the form of an interactive program guide.
18. The entertainment system of claim 17, wherein the interactive program guide includes information about previously recorded television programs.
19. The entertainment system of claim 15 wherein, in response to a request from a guest terminal, the computer causes the digital content server to supply television signals based upon the digital file representing the selected program.
20. The entertainment system of claim 15 wherein the computer creates a recording schedule for the encoder based upon data from the guest terminals representing selections by guests of programs to be recorded.